

Monroe County 2003-2004 BRC- Active Balanced Community Youth Initiative GROWING UP IN MONROE

Youth organizations participating

- American Red Cross – ROCK Youth Group*
- Arthur Lesow Community Center-Girl Scouts
- Arthur Lesow Community Center-Teens
- Big Brothers-Big Sisters Monroe*
- Community Foundation of Monroe County-Youth Advisory Council*
- Gabby's Ladder
- Girl Scouts – Huron Valley Council- Lincoln School*
- Girl Scouts – Huron Valley Council- Cadettes/Seniors
- Give a Hand, Take a Hand Mentoring Project – Fourth Graders*
- Holy Cross Children's Services (Boysville) Moreau Center
- Jefferson School
- Monroe County 4H (8 individual clubs from around the county)*
- Monroe County ISD – Youth Leadership 2003
- Monroe County Head Start – Lincoln School
- Monroe High School 9th Grade Academy*
- Monroe Family YMCA – After School Gym&Swim
- Salvation Army Harbor Light –The Family Center*
- St. Mary's Grade School

* sent representatives to 2-26-04 event

Projects prepared by these groups addressed the following areas:

What makes Monroe famous?
What is good about growing up in Monroe?
What is missing?
What can we improve?

Projects were murals, scrapbooks, photos, pictures and essays; the projects were completed independently by each group between November 2003 and January 2004.

The actual projects will be displayed at the Childcare Network's Celebrate Children Day at the Frenchtown Mall on April 24, 2004 and will be used at the BRC Active Balanced Community Introduction to the Community on Law Day April 30, 2004.

On February 26, 2004, 34 young people representing the participating youth groups were part of a Youth Group Presentation at Monroe Middle School. They reviewed each others projects, presented their group's project and worked together to summarize "Growing up in Monroe County". The Easel Information from this event is printed below.

Monroe BRC – Active Balanced Community Youth Presentation
February 26, 2004 at Monroe Middle School
WHY ARE WE HERE?

Monroe County . . . a place to grow up

What is good? What is missing? What can we improve?

MONROE COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population (2002 estimate)	148,555	
Youth (0-17 years old)	39,700	28% of the county's population
Gender:	Male 49.6%	
	Female 50.4%	
Diversity: (2000 census)	Caucasian 139,000	
	African American 2,777	
	Hispanic 3,110	
	Other 2,800	

WHAT IS GOOD?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference Expert Good/Bad/New Multi level education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocation centered Good teachers Good buildings Historical with Landmarks Teens get together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mall Library Church Parks Recreation Opportunity for all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library programs Access to water Recreation Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biking Walks County Fair Agriculture & City Environment Cultural support for youth Teachers well educated Faith based Scouting, Camp Fire, Girl Scouts County opportunities w/Ohio Community joins hands Ethnic opportunity for growth |
|--|---|

WHAT IS MISSING?

- Additional activities to meet cultural interest and youth interest
- Affordable housing
- Additional arts & culture (e.g. Irish/International Cultures)
- Recreation for teens ---- Affordable/Free
- Jobs for High School students
- Recreation equipment/playgrounds
- Peace
- Shopping Centers/Mall Stores
- Teen workshops for life issues --- Peer mediation (friends to share secrets) ---- Focus groups
- Entertainment/zoo
- Need more homeless shelters

WHAT CAN WE IMPROVE?

Four categories of concern emerged - Culture, Land, Youth Development, Housing
The youth worked in groups to address the needs in these categories – results follow

CELEBRATE OUR CULTURE

I want more police so more kids will get freedom.
Some kids don't get freedom because parents are scared their kids are going to get kidnapped.
Most of us need freedom. That's what I really want. . . .
I would give people freedom and hope of better place to hang out with different races.
We should always have respect for what is right.
I think we should have places for younger children so they grow up with the chance of learning about different cultural groups.
Treat people the same.
Care for different cultural beliefs.

CELEBRATE OUR LAND

Centrally located activities
Animals/interactive parks (zoo)
Countywide sports leagues
Stop housing developments – mobile home parks
Agriculture/season based festivals
Clean up beaches
More recycling

CELEBRATE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Focus on keeping our teens off streets (away from drugs & gangs) and out of sexual involvement
Anonymous means of receiving sex information/education
Police keeping drugs off streets and out of school
Need people teens can trust, teens teaching teens

CELEBRATE HOUSING

Homeless shelters
Cheaper homes that aren't crappy
Homes for ill people who can't afford other homes
Homes for elderly people who cannot afford them
Fixing broken down homes
Home for single parents that are affordable
Make it easier for people to buy homes
Tear down abandoned buildings and build better/affordable homes for people
Safer neighborhoods

AT THE END WE ASKED WHAT HAVE WE MISSED – WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Responses were:

More Youth Centers (one for every Senior Center) with counseling, recreation, peer to peer

Where is the money?

We need to feed the homeless

**“MONROE COUNTY A PLACE TO GROW UP.....”
Monroe Middle School – February 26, 2004
Youth Representatives – Active Balanced Community Initiative**

Youth Group Participants in session:

- Monroe High School 9th Grade Academy Students
- American Red Cross ROCK Youth Group
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters (littles)
- 4-H groups from around the county
- Lincoln Elementary School – Mentoring program (4th Graders) and Girl Scouts
- Community Foundation of Monroe County - Youth Advisory Council
- Salvation Army Harbor Light - The Family Center

Session Facilitators:

Co-Chairs BRC Youth Workgroup

Bev Heck – retired Arthur Leslow CC
John Aren – Salvation Army

Each group presented their project.

Some designed collages of what Monroe County means to them.

Others wrote essays to answer questions about growing up in Monroe.

All participated in a brainstorming activity about what is Good, what is Missing, and what can be improved.

Here are their answers as recorded by an adult representative of the BRC Outreach/Communication/Media Workgroup

GOOD

Different people
 Multi level education (ie: College)
 Historical
 Landmarks
 Some teen hang-outs (ie: school, library, Mall)
 Equal opportunity in jobs and education
 Advance VOT and education in schools
 Good Library
 Waterfront recreation (ie: State Park)
 Walkways and trails for walking or biking
 County fair
 Agriculture
 Cultural support for youth by group's
 Active churches
 Scouting and other youth groups
 Mid way between Toledo and Detroit for cultural activities
 Fair and sensitive to African Americans, better opportunities

MISSING

Community wide activities
 Cultural interest, special programs for diversity
 Program and activities for summer
 Affordable housing
 Art Museums
 International celebrations
 Affordable recreation
 Better recreation equipment for schools and center
 Peace and to feel safe at home and school
 Trendy stores that appeal to youth
 Teen counseling to talk about sex, drugs, & suicide
 Zoo
 Homeless shelters
 Jobs for youth/high school students

IMPROVE

Education
Culture-Interaction between races. Museums, festivals, celebrations of other cultures. More state funded programs.
Land/Recreation- Centrally located recreation. Stop housing developments to allow for zoos & more parks. More activities/programs at State Park. Clean up beaches. Build youth recreation center. Recycling county wide.
Youth Development-
 Ways to keep teens off street, away from drugs, helpful safe sex education; including resources for sex education and an information center for teens only. Acceptance of different religions, ways of life. Anonymous peer counselors.
Housing-more shelters, fixing/renovating older homes. Reasonably priced homes for low income/single parents. Programs to make homes more affordable. Safer neighborhoods. More police presence.

SUMMARY: as John Aren wrapped up this brain storming session, The youth expressed the need to have a multifunctional youth facility to house services, programs, and recreation. A center that is centrally located and affordable maybe even free.